DEPARTMENT OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND SKILLS

ANNUAL REPORT

2015-16

growth through employment
strength in diversity
dignity by inclusion

Newfoundland Labrador

Advanced Education and Skills

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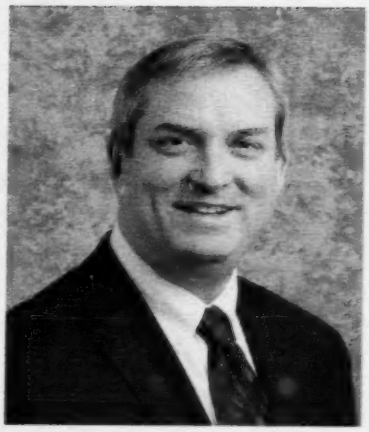

Honourable Gerry Byrne

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2015-16 Annual Report for the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. This performance report outlines the Department's activities from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 and is submitted in accordance with the Department's obligation as a category one entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The Department's performance report was prepared under my direction, and as Minister, I am accountable for the results reported within.

The 2015-16 Annual Report serves a dual purpose. It enables me to document the progress achieved towards the goals of the Department during the second year of the 2014-17 departmental strategic plan. It also allows me to highlight important activities the Department has undertaken this past year and outline some of the opportunities and challenges we collectively face in 2016-17.

As the Minister responsible for Immigration and Multiculturalism, the Syrian refugee crisis stands out for me as a shining example of how this province and its citizens respond to people in need. From October 2015 to March 2016, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed over 260 Syrian refugees, through both the Federal Government Assisted Refugee and the Privately Sponsored Refugee programs. I am proud of the role that the Provincial Government and the people of this province continue to play in welcoming and providing a safe and promising future for newcomers.

On a daily basis, I am encouraged by the Department's ongoing work to help individuals and families live independent and fulfilling lives. This work includes providing support for people working to acquire the education and skills necessary to succeed in a challenging and evolving economy: whether it is students, individuals who are unemployed or under-employed, or people and groups who are under-represented in the work place.

On August 17, 2016 the new Labour Policy and Services Branch joined the newly named Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. The addition of the Labour Policy and Services Branch in the Department, will help ensure programs and services for employers and those entering the workforce are better aligned. This will support more comprehensive and focused planning and improved service delivery.

Looking forward, we will continue to build on efforts to develop a skilled labour force, enhance post-secondary education and adult learning, and support increased immigration. In addition we will promote positive labour relations, help to resolve workplace issues and maintain a relevant employment relations regulatory framework. In these challenging times, we will seek out new opportunities for growth and development. This work will be carried out with the goal of enabling people to succeed and prosper so that they can contribute more fully to the well-being of the province.

Respectfully submitted,

GERRY BYRNE, MHA
DISTRICT OF CORNER BROOK
MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, SKILLS AND LABOUR

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DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills plays a pivotal role in the province's social and economic fabric through the delivery of a comprehensive range of programs and services.

Vision

Growth through employment, strength in diversity, dignity by inclusion.

Mission

By 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the quality and the delivery of supports and services.

Mandate

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills helps citizens obtain the necessary educational, financial, and social supports to achieve the greatest benefit from the opportunities that exist in the province.

To ensure the province has a skilled workforce and highly educated graduates to participate in and contribute to their communities, the Department works with employers, and collaborates with private post-secondary institutions, Memorial University (MUN), and College of the North Atlantic (CNA).

The Department also provides supports to meet labour market demands, increase labour force participation, facilitate immigration, promote multiculturalism, and support adult literacy to strengthen individual self-reliance.

Lines of Business

The Department provides a spectrum of programs and services: to support attachment to the labour force; to help meet the province's labour market needs; and to support individuals when they require assistance. Programs and services are grouped in the following four areas:

① **Employment supports and career services** (e.g. career counseling, wage subsidies, apprenticeship and trade certification supports, job searches, pre-employment readiness, training, and skills enhancement)

② **Income supports and basic benefits** (e.g. monthly benefits, earning supplements, and one-time benefits)

③ **Labour market development and immigration** (e.g. supporting employers with recruitment, retention, and human resource planning, as well as providing individuals with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities)

④ **Post-secondary education** (e.g. supports to individuals such as training, tuition supports, apprenticeship, trade certification, student financial assistance, student assessment, adult literacy, as well as providing policy support to post-secondary institutions)

Further details on the Department's programs and services can be found by visiting www.aes.gov.nl.ca.

Information is also available on the Provincial Government's Open Government website http://open.gov.nl.ca/. Included on this site are: the Income Support caseload statistics; the Income and Employment Support Policy Manual; the breakdown for the tuition off-set grant for Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic by year; Student Financial Services statistics; and, Apprenticeship examination results.

Structure

The Department's staff complement for 2015-16 consisted of 738 positions, of which 592 were permanent and 146 were temporary. The departmental gender breakdown was 75 per cent females and 25 per cent males.

Approximately 49 per cent of our employees are located in offices in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) which includes sites at Confederation Building and Coughlan College at Memorial University. The remaining 51 per cent of staff are located in offices throughout the province.

The organizational structure of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills includes four branches:

- Workforce Development and Immigration
- Post-Secondary Education
- Corporate Services (including Executive Support Services)
- Regional Service Delivery

Workforce Development and Immigration

- The role of this branch is to ensure that labour market and immigration-related policies, programs, services and initiatives are strategically aligned to develop and deploy a highly trained and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands in the province.
- The branch is responsible for the administration of a broad range of client-focused, labour market-related programs designed to assist people in securing training and finding sustainable employment, and in helping employers meet labour supply challenges.
- The branch administers the Provincial Nominee Program to support immigration as well as a range of employment programs and supports that encourage labour market attachment.

Post-Secondary Education

- The role of this branch is to support the delivery of post-secondary education in the province through Memorial University (MUN), College of the North Atlantic (CNA), and private training institutions.
- The branch is also responsible for adult learning and literacy, the provision of financial assistance to post-secondary education students, as well as programs and supports for apprenticeship and trade certification.

Corporate Services (including Executive Support Services)

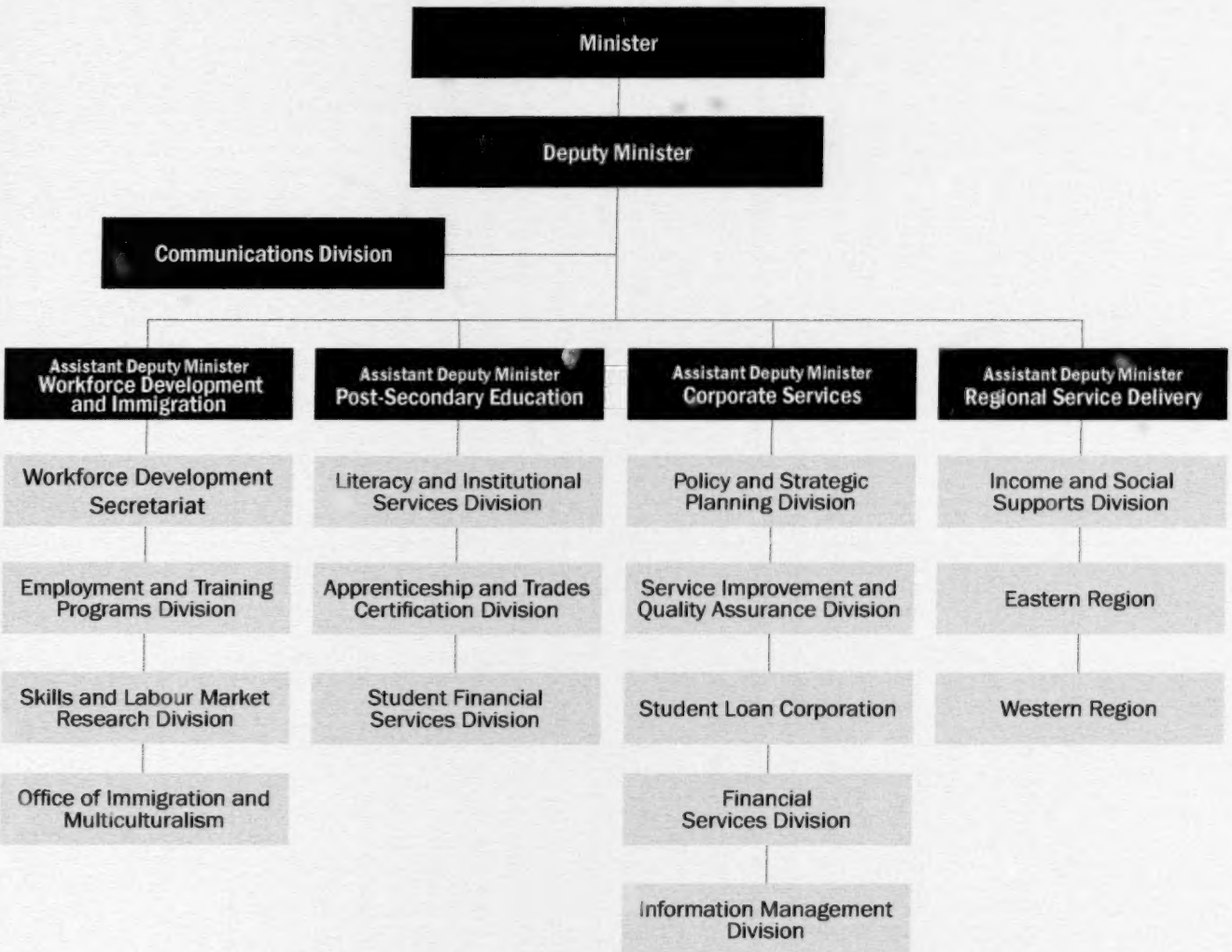
- The role of this branch is to ensure the Department's financial management, corporate policy and planning, service improvement and quality assurance, as well as information management functions are achieved.
- The branch also has responsibility for the Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador which provides financial administration for the Newfoundland and Labrador Student Financial Assistance Program.

Regional Service Delivery

- The role of this branch is to deliver the Department's programs and services throughout the province to a large and varied client base, including individuals who may need income and employment supports. The delivery model has continued to evolve; the primary mechanisms for receiving services include telephone, email, or in-person, at one of the 19 Employment Centres.
- The branch also has responsibility for program and policy development as it relates to income and social supports.

The Department's Organizational Chart is provided below:

Departmental Organizational Structure


Minister
Deputy Minister
Communications Division
Assistant Deputy Minister Workforce Development and Immigration
Assistant Deputy Minister Post-Secondary Education
Assistant Deputy Minister Corporate Services
Assistant Deputy Minister Regional Service Delivery
Workforce Development Secretariat
Employment and Training Programs Division
Skills and Labour Market Research Division
Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism
Literacy and Institutional Services Division
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division
Student Financial Services Division
Policy and Strategic Planning Division
Service Improvement and Quality Assurance Division
Student Loan Corporation
Financial Services Division
Information Management Division
Income and Social Supports Division
Eastern Region
Western Region

Geographic Overview

For the delivery of services, Newfoundland and Labrador is broken down into two regions, Eastern and Western (which includes Labrador).

Student Financial Services is located in:

- St. John's - Coughlan College, MUN St. John's Campus

The Eastern Region includes 7 offices with Employment Centres in the following areas:

- Carbonear
- Clarenville (including Apprenticeship)
- Marystown
- Mount Pearl (including Apprenticeship)
- Dunville
- St. John's – Duckworth Street
- St. John's – Elizabeth Avenue

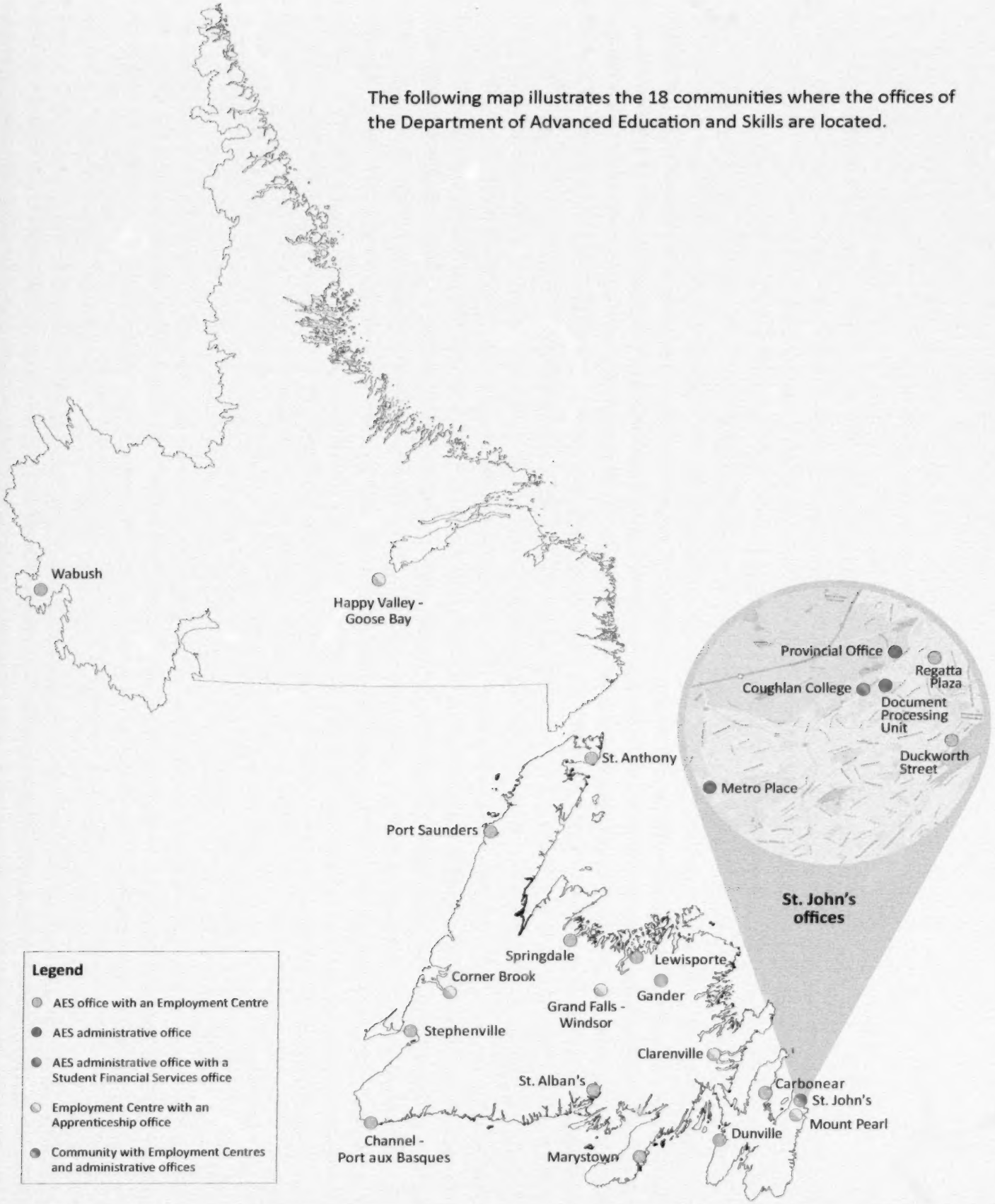
The Western Region includes 12 offices with Employment Centres in the following areas:

- Channel-Port aux Basques
- Corner Brook (including Apprenticeship)
- Gander
- Grand Falls-Windsor (including Apprenticeship)
- Happy Valley-Goose Bay (including Apprenticeship)
- Lewisporte
- Port Saunders
- Springdale
- St. Alban's
- St. Anthony
- Stephenville
- Wabush

Administration Offices are located in the following areas:

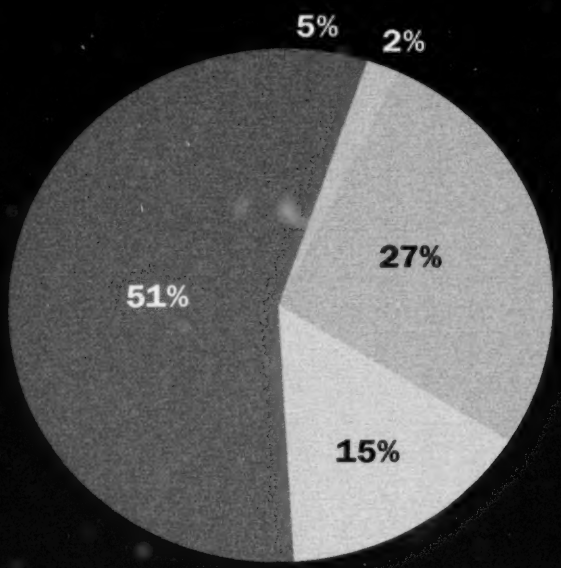
- St. John's – Kenmount Road (Metro Place)
- St. John's – Confederation Building
- St. John's – Document Processing Unit, Petten Building

The following map illustrates the 18 communities where the offices of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills are located.



Expenditures

During the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Department's gross expenditures were $863.6 million. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



Fiscal Year 2015-16 Gross Expenditures:

Advanced Studies	$440.6M
Income and Social Development	$230.0M
Workforce Development and Immigration	$132.8M
Executive and Support Services	$39.3M
Service Delivery	$20.9M

At $440.6 million, the greatest expenditure in the Department was in support of Advanced Studies including $86.8 million for CNA, $324.5 million for MUN, $11.5 million for Apprenticeship, and $17.8 million for other post-secondary education initiatives. Income and Social Development accounted for $230.0 million, providing social and financial supports for individuals and families in our province. Workforce Development and Immigration accounted for approximately $132.8 million, of which $123.8 million focused on providing employment and training benefits under the Labour Market Development Agreement, the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, as well as other employment development and training programs. A summary of expenditures and related revenue can be found on page 38 of this report.

SHARED COMMITMENTS

Collaboration continues to be essential to address those goals identified in the Department's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. To fulfill its mandate, the Department works with many partners including community-based organizations; different levels of government; other departments; MUN, CNA and private training institutions; as well as other entities reporting to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills. For a list of the nine additional public bodies that report to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, refer to Appendix B of this report.

Examples of successful collaborative partnerships to achieve shared commitments include:

- Funding the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation to gather and assess labour supply information about its members, such as work experience, education, training, and certifications in order to connect members to potential employment.
- Collaborating with the Association for New Canadians to support Syrian refugees in making this province their new home.
- Working with over 280 municipalities and local organizations through the Job Creation Partnership Program, to employ an estimated 1,300 individuals throughout 171 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, completing projects across several sectors, including tourism, culture and heritage, as well as sports and recreation.
- Cooperating with not-for-profit organizations and private employers to hire approximately 2,600 students in 2015-16, under the Student Summer Employment Program.
- Partnering with employers on recruiting employees through 15 job fairs held throughout the province with approximately 745 participants.
- Collaborating with community agencies to fund 178 initiatives to support over 1,500 individuals to prepare for, attain and maintain employment, or make the transition to a new job.
- Working with Empower - the Disability Resource Centre (formerly known as Independent Living Resource Centre - ILRC) to support the Businesses OPEN Program, which provides accessibility assessments, training, and solutions to improve the accessibility of businesses for persons with disabilities.
- Increasing labour force participation by working in collaboration with industry partners and employers in developing the skills of employees through programs such as the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant.
- Collaborating through the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) and the Atlantic Workforce Partnership (AWP) on matters of mutual interest, such as workforce development, labour market information, apprenticeship, and training supports.
- Working with the Canadian Red Cross to provide emergency social services to individuals and families such as in the case of the 60 people affected by an apartment building fire in Corner Brook.

The Department also works collaboratively to advance horizontal initiatives across government, including immigration and the promotion of multiculturalism to support population growth. In addition, collaborative efforts are underway to support initiatives led by other departments and agencies, which include work on horizontal strategies, such as the inclusion of persons with disabilities, greening government, poverty reduction, and violence prevention.

"The Department works with many partners including community-based organizations, different levels of government, other departments, and entities."

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills endeavours to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador has highly educated graduates and skilled workers to meet labour market needs, through the delivery of a spectrum of services and supports. 2015-16 has been an active year with many notable highlights and accomplishments.

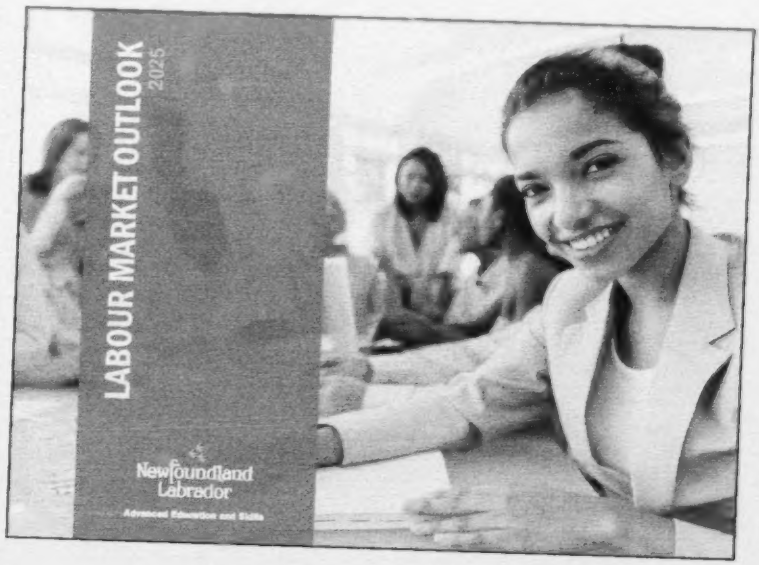
Population growth is critical to the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. The plan for population growth centers on fostering innovation in our economy, encouraging growth, and connecting residents to jobs and other opportunities. As part of our efforts to grow the province's population, the Department will develop and implement an immigration strategy to retain and attract new residents to the province, create a recruitment strategy for expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, focus on retaining youth entrepreneurs, and make the employment of youth, women, and persons with disabilities a priority. To help inform, plan and prioritize efforts in this area, the Department held roundtable discussions from June to September 2015 in 22 locations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, which engaged over 350 participants.

In July 2015, the Department also released "Train Here: A Roadmap for Apprenticeship Renewal". This roadmap outlines a renewed vision for the skilled trades in Newfoundland and Labrador through the implementation of eight key initiatives, such as simplifying the apprenticeship process; engaging youth in apprenticeship; and, improving labour mobility for apprentices. Accordingly, the Department signed three agreements: an Atlantic Mobility Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an Apprenticeship Mobility MOU with the Province of British Columbia, and a National Mobility Agreement and Protocol with all provinces and territories. These agreements make it easier for apprentices to gain access to on-the-job training and the work experience needed to complete their certification, while helping to meet labour demands. As an illustrative example, three trades, (carpenter, brick-layer, and cook) were "harmonized" with the Atlantic Provinces, to include common curriculum, hours, log books, and exams.

During the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Department published two key documents providing relevant and timely information on the provincial labour market:

Job Vacancy Report - provides a detailed analysis of more than 38,000 job advertisements recorded during the 2014 calendar year. This analysis includes regions where jobs were located, key industries, in-demand occupations and education requirements for these occupations. The report is available at www.aes.gov.nl.ca/lmi.html.

Labour Market Outlook - includes information about the provincial workforce, labour demands, employment outcomes, and helps answer questions about current and emerging job prospects for the next 10 years. The report is available at www.aes.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/labour_market_outlook2025.pdf



To support the affordability of post-secondary education, the Provincial Government first provided funding to enable a tuition freeze in 1999. Sixteen years later, this commitment to post-secondary accesibility was reaffirmed in the Minister's December 2015 mandate letter, which committed to a tuition freeze for Newfoundland and Labrador resident students. This continued in 2015-16 with a total investment of $57.8 million.

The Department also introduced the Part-Time Incentive Grant Program for eligible students, to ease the financial burden associated with part-time post-secondary study. This needs-based grant provides an incentive to encourage mature learners, and those participating in the workforce, to continue their education through part-time studies.The Income Support Program provides a variety of benefits and services to individuals and families most in need. These benefits are designed to meet basic needs of those who are not able to permanently attach to the workforce, while providing short term financial support to others, as they transition into employment. The Department continues to make advancements in reducing the reliance on income support benefits.

- In the last fiscal year, the number of cases receiving employment and training interventions peaked at 7.1 per cent (2,138 cases); up from 6.2 per cent (1,928 cases) in 2014-15.
- 3.0 per cent of the caseload (818 cases) left income support following participation in employment programs in 2015-16; up from 2.4 per cent (668 cases) in 2014-15.

While the total number of cases (i.e., family units) are increasing across the country, Newfoundland and Labrador has fewer residents receiving income support benefits than ever before. The composition of the caseload has also undergone a significant transformation, which will require an innovative approach to delivery going forward.

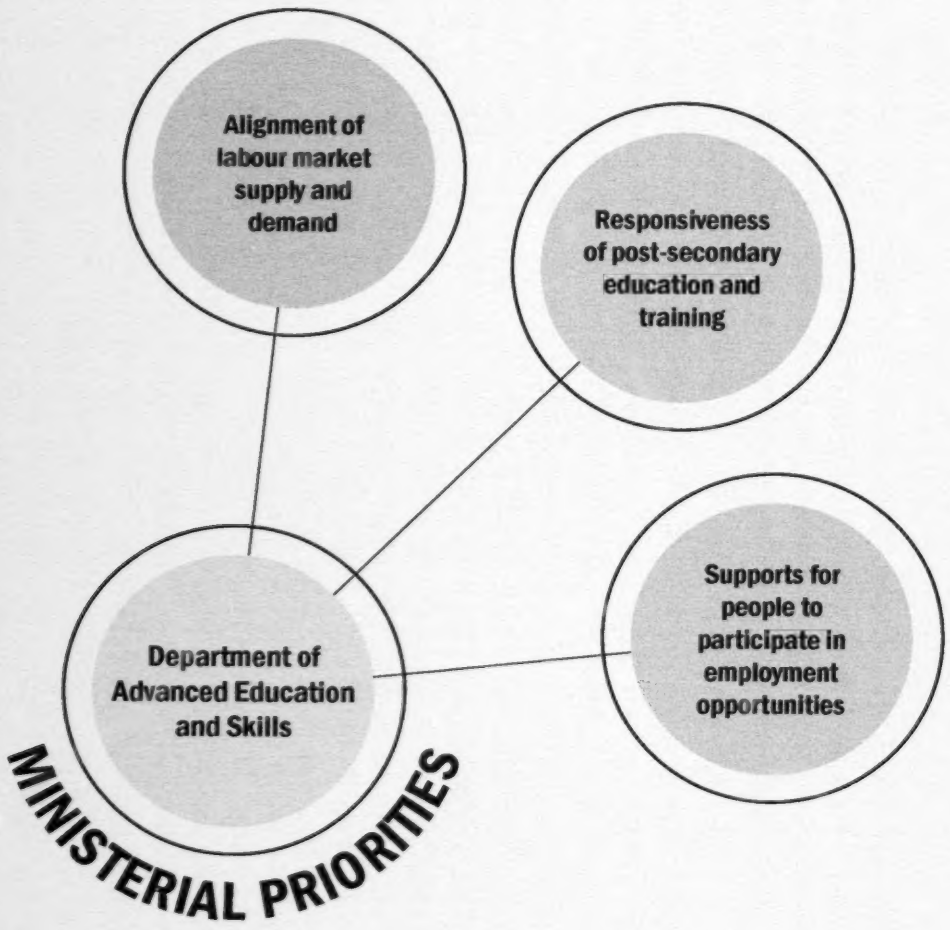
Addressing strategic issues through three-year goals and 2015-16 objectives

In the Department's 2014-17 Strategic Plan, three issues were identified as key Ministerial priorities:

1. Alignment of labour market supply and demand;
2. Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training; and,
3. Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.

In developing strategic plans, departments create three-year goals to achieve their mandates and to help address important issues facing the province. To achieve the goals of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, an incremental approach over the three years of the plan is being taken, whereby annual objectives are identified for each fiscal year. At the end of the three years, it is envisioned that collectively, the annual objectives will have assisted the Department in reaching its multi-year goals.

This Annual Report highlights the Department's progress in achieving these three-year goals by reporting on its achievement of the 2015-16 performance indicators. Progress on each strategic issue is outlined in the subsequent pages of this report, under each indicator, as well as in the three sections entitled Discussion of Results.


Alignment of labour market supply and demand
Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training
Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities
Department of Advanced Education and Skills
MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

Given the province's historical context, economic activity in Newfoundland and Labrador remained strong throughout 2015-16, even with the drop in oil output and price. Although the current population estimate for 2015 indicates a slight decline of 0.2 per cent in population from 2014, sustained economic growth has helped to increase the province's population in recent years so that the province recorded a total gain of 20,000 persons between 2008 and 2014.

Labour Market Outlook 2025 anticipates fluctuations in employment levels over the next decade based on employment cycles linked to major construction projects. While employment levels in the province declined by 1.0 per cent during 2015 compared to 2014, other indicators of labour market activity were more positive. As noted in The Economy, Statistics Canada's Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours reported that average weekly earnings in the province rose by 2.6 per cent in 2015 and, at $1,017.00, earnings were the second highest among provinces after Alberta. The increase in wages led to a 2.7 per cent gain in total compensation for employees in 2015. The survey also indicated an increase in the number of employees every month during 2015 and, on average, an increase of 0.8 per cent for the year.

The need to support the alignment of labour supply with demand remains an essential aspect of the Department's strategy to maximize employment opportunities for individuals and provide employers with the workers they need to drive growth in the provincial economy. The Department has done so through improving the use of labour market information; tailoring programs to respond to labour market needs; increasing employer access to skilled newcomers; and, seeking ways to incorporate regional and sector-based labour market opportunities into planning, training, and skills development opportunities for individuals and employers. Illustrative examples include releasing labour market information tools, reviewing and modifying programs, and continuing to deliver employment supports and services to over 23,000 citizens. The Department also collaborates with key industry stakeholders on initiatives that support the alignment of labour market supply and demand, including programs such as the Labour Market Partnerships Program, Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant, and the JobsNL Wage Subsidy. These initiatives also demonstrate the achievement of the published objective to continue initiatives to improve supports which promote alignment of labour market supply and demand.

The following section outlines specific results for the identified performance indicators which include new labour market information tools; new tools for employers who require immigration services; the review and assessment of programs to increase responsiveness; and, increased promotion to integrate regional and sector opportunities into programs.

	Strategic Issue 1
3-Year Goal	By March 31, 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved its supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand.
Year 2 Objective (2015-16)	By March 31, 2016, the Department will have continued initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand.
Measure	Continued initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Provided labour market information tools to employers, individuals, and institutions.	During 2015-16, the Department finalized and distributed newly developed labour market information (LMI) tools to individuals, institutions, and employers to assist with the alignment of labour supply and demand. In April 2015, *Job Vacancy Report 2014* was released. This document provided a detailed analysis of more than 38,000 job advertisements recorded during the 2014 calendar year. This analysis includes regions where jobs were located, key industries, in-demand occupations, and education requirements for these occupations. The report also provides information on post-secondary training requirements for different jobs, such as a university degree, college diploma, and college certificate or apprenticeship certification. In August 2015, *Labour Market Outlook 2025* was released. This document provided a projection of the province's labour demands for the next decade and outlined the prospects for various occupations. The report also provided a detailed outlook on the economy, demographics, employment, labour supply, occupations, and helps answer important questions about current and emerging job prospects. Target audiences include job seekers, employers, industry, post-secondary institutions, and government agencies. Of note, over the 2015 to 2025 period, about 57 per cent of job openings will be in occupations that are in management or require some form of post-secondary education. New entrants will be the biggest single source of new labour supply, which is an important fact when setting future labour market policy. It is expected that their numbers will be exceeded by labour market exits due to attrition. As such, immigration and migration of people from elsewhere in Canada will be required to meet projected labour market needs.

"Target audiences include jobseekers, employers, industry, post-secondary institutions, and governmental agencies."

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Provided labour market information tools to employers, individuals, institutions *(continued)*.	Overall, to promote these new LMI tools, several delivery channels were used, including websites, one-on-one meetings with employers and key stakeholders, employee training, as well as networking opportunities around the province. The Department's Labour Market Development Officers (LMDOs) actively promote labour market information tools and resources, and assist employers with the use of such tools. Other specific examples of distribution include the 22 Workforce Development Roundtables held throughout the province, where the LMI tools were used to encourage discussions on employment, anticipated human resources needs, and workforce challenges. Post-secondary institutions were also provided with labour market information tools and resources to facilitate academic planning. As well, a series of meetings were held in March 2016 with 20 private training institutions and CNA to discuss current labour market information needs and sources; *Labour Market Outlook 2025* was sent to all post-secondary institutions; and data from the Graduate Follow-up Survey and the *Job Vacancy Report 2014* was also provided to CNA. Departmental staff also participated in over 30 events, trade shows, employment fairs, conferences, and meetings to promote labour market tools, as well as program, services, and employer services and supports. Illustrative examples include: Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador's Tourism "Supports for You" Fall 2015 Roadshow; the St. John's Board of Trade's "Employer Employees: Invest in the Right Talent" 2015 Event; and the Community Business Development Corporations' Annual General Meeting.

"The Job Vacancy Report includes regions where jobs were located, key industries, in-demand occupations, and education requirements for these occupations."

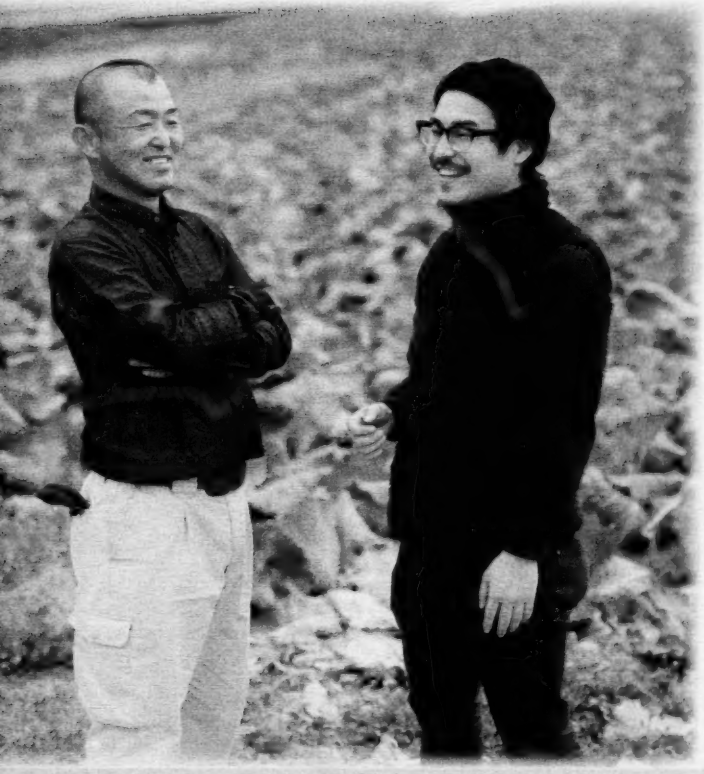
Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
2. Identified opportunities to tailor programs to respond to labour market demands.	Responsiveness is a key element of supporting the alignment of labour supply and demand. This involves assessing and tailoring programs and services to meet the needs of the province. As mentioned previously, during the 2015-16 year the Department hosted 22 Workforce Development Roundtables throughout the province, engaging more than 350 stakeholders. These sessions provided valuable insight into opportunities for future change to ensure programs are tailored to respond to labour market demands. Feedback from sessions was categorized into the following key themes: promotion of programs and services; employer engagement; human resource supports (i.e., succession planning, recruitment, and retention); labour market information; regulatory improvement; training (i.e., employer and post-secondary); as well as international students and immigration. During 2015-16, the Department also completed several reviews, assessments and pilot projects to identify opportunities to tailor departmental programs to respond to labour market demands going forward. • The Department offers a suite of over 25 labour market programs and services, which include employment readiness programs. The long-standing Employment Transitions Program for single parents and the Sector Skills Program piloted in 2013-14, both provide employment readiness supports. Both programs were reviewed in 2015-16 to explore modification options to better serve clients that are having difficulty attaching to the labour market. These reviews revealed that a blended model that is client-based and provides incentives to employment, once the individualized support is complete, would be more effective for aligning labour supply and demand. The Department is currently exploring the development of a new model to incorporate these suggestions. • The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Job Grant (C-NLJG) provides funding to employers to train new and existing employees. In June 2015, the Department commissioned the services of Goss Gilroy Inc., to conduct a year-two review of the C-NLJG. The findings of the review noted the need for the program to have greater flexibility to respond to provincial labour market needs. In addition, findings revealed the need to support small-to-medium-sized employers, expand employer eligibility criteria, enhance promotion efforts, clarify eligibility requirements, and increase program flexibility to target regional employment needs. Findings from the review were shared with the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) and the Atlantic Workforce Partnership (AWP). The Government of Canada acknowledged the need for additional flexibility and expressed a willingness to review program parameters going forward. Should changes be implemented, expanded eligibility criteria and increased flexibility in the program will support additional training. Such training helps employers re-tool enterprises to be more responsive to labour market demands.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
2. Identified opportunities to tailor programs to respond to labour market demands *(continued)*.	Process changes and a pilot to assist with exam preparation were also identified in 2015-16: • Identifying and remaining connected with pre-apprentices in various college programs was also identified as an opportunity to increase understanding of the labour market supply, which is explicitly linked to labour market demand. In July 2015, the Department added a tracking system to monitor pre-apprentices who successfully completed entry-level skilled trades programs in post-secondary training institutions. Training institutions were asked to submit information on pre-apprentices twice a year, beginning in December 2015. The ongoing collection of information on pre-apprentices assists with planning at post-secondary institutions and in various employment sectors. It also provides an opportunity for the Department to follow-up with graduates to determine if they need further employment or career counselling assistance. • In 2015-16, the Department developed and implemented a modified training pilot for Trade Qualifiers on site at Muskrat Falls, in partnership with the Carpenters' Union. A Red Seal Preparatory Program, that offered exam preparation assistance on worksites, was developed and delivered to support apprentices to achieve journeyperson certification. This new model meant apprentices did not have to leave employment, which resulted in less disruption for both employers and employees. Two groups representing 20 individuals participated in this modified training model at the Muskrat Falls site. The Department also developed a new program-specific workshop to maximize the number of individuals funded under the Skills Development Program, to improve responsiveness. Including Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and apprentices, this program funded approximately 8,700 individuals in 2015-16, up from just over 8,400 participants in 2014-15. Given the high volume of applicants to this program, the Department created an in-person workshop on the Skills Development Program, along with its suite of workshops and information sessions offered this past year. Completing this workshop reduced applicant wait-times and improved the processing of applications, as clients were more prepared and were able to maximize their time with a Case Manager in advance of submitting an application. Over 4,750 individuals completed this session.

"The Department offers a suite of over 25 labour market programs and services, which include employment readiness programs."

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
3. Developed tools to increase employer access to skilled immigrants.	Newcomers to the province continue to play an important role in helping to address labour shortages in certain regions, as well as creating more diversity in our population. During 2015-16, the Department increased employer access to skilled immigrants by offering new services and tools for employers. In October 2015, the Department launched a new Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) category for provincially nominated immigrants, entitled Express Entry Skilled Worker Category. This category provides employers with the ability to identify and select candidates who meet their labour needs. It features a commitment from the Government of Canada to process immigration applications of the selected candidates in six months or less, which represents a reduced processing time of approximately 50 per cent. Associated with the launch of this new category, an Express Entry Employer Information Booklet was developed and released, to help employers connect with skilled immigrants; and, an Express Entry Application Guide was also designed and released that outlines the application requirements for nomination under the Provincial Nominee Program. Details on total number of nominations and permanent residents are outlined in the Discussion of Results on page 20. Staying connected with international students and advising them of employment opportunities in the province is a key tool to increase employer access to skilled immigrants. International students attending MUN, CNA, as well as private training institutions, represent a significant future source of qualified workers who may wish to stay and work in the province post-graduation. In September 2015, the Department established a Manager of International Recruitment position in Memorial University's International Student Advising Office, to increase its connectivity with international students and graduates. This position focuses on encouraging students and graduates to remain in the province by providing relevant labour market information and immigration support. As an example, in the winter semester 2016, a series of one-on-one information sessions were held with 74 international students and graduates that were interested in learning more about the province's labour market and immigration opportunities. In addition to the individual sessions, six group sessions, attended by 90 students, were also held. The immigration web portal (www.nlpnp.ca/employers.html) was enhanced in September 2015 to provide the capability to profile upcoming recruitment events to encourage employer participation. While the Department has the primary role in promoting the province at these events, employers are actively encouraged to attend as well, especially if they have known skill shortages that may be addressed through international recruitment. As an example, the website was revised in February 2016 to promote an international recruitment event in the United Kingdom. As a result, one employer attended the event and ten other employers profiled their vacancies internationally.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
3. Developed tools to increase employer access to skilled immigrants *(continued)*.	The Department is also working with post-secondary staff responsible for supporting international students and graduates at MUN, Grenfell College, Marine Institute, and CNA. It has been determined that by helping international students navigate the immigration process, they are more likely to choose the province as a place to live and work upon graduation. As such, in September 2015, the Department participated in the MUN Career Fair providing labour market and immigration information to international students and graduates. The Department also participated at CNA's Meet and Greet Orientation for international students, informing them of available immigration options, post-graduation. In addition, the Department has worked to increase regional immigration services available to both employers and newcomers. Labour Market Development Officers (LMDOs) throughout the province are assisting employers in their recruitment efforts to hire employees in hard-to-fill positions by collaborating in job fairs (15 job fairs were held in 2015-16), connecting employers to the job matching services on www.jobbank.gc.ca, and promoting employment opportunities to job seekers who visit Employment Centres. The Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (OIM) also delivered 17 information sessions to employers around the province on how immigration can help provide skilled employees to enterprises.



"Newcomers to the province continue to play an important role in helping to address labour shortages in certain regions, as well as creating more diversity in our population."

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
4. Identified ways to integrate regional labour market opportunities into program offerings.	The Department continues to provide support to employers, industry associations, community groups, and communities to create awareness of local and regional employment opportunities. However, new tools, resources, and investments in employees have identified new ways to integrate regional labour market opportunities into programs. The Department's network of Employment Centres around the province play a key role in matching job opportunities with citizens. Each Centre is proactive in promoting the services offered and the needs of employers through trade shows, events like Small Business Week, and through employer visits. The addition of tools such as *Job Vacancy Report 2014* and *Labour Market Outlook 2025* are invaluable resources for informing job seekers about regional labour market opportunities. Staff now have access to more regional labour market information when working with clients to develop employment plans; discussing labour market opportunities; exploring job opportunities, both locally as well as abroad; guiding re-training decisions; supporting clients to conduct their own labour market research; and, when networking with employers and organizations. Given the vast geography of the province, the Department has focused efforts in the last year on developing and introducing a comprehensive suite of six employment-related workshops and information sessions, both online and in-person. During 2015-16, approximately 5,700 individuals participated in 898 sessions that covered topics such as Job Search, Resume Writing, Career Planning, Labour Market Information, Skills Development Program Preparation, and an Information Session on Programs for Individuals who are Not Eligible for Employment Insurance (EI). These sessions have reached more clients and provided consistent messages on programs and supports. A case management in-service training module was developed and delivered to improve the integration of regional labour market opportunities into programs offered by the Department. The new module outlined standards of practice for effectively using the case management system, utilizing labour market information in developing employment plans with clients, as well as using published information to recommend funded interventions, so that more clients could make informed decisions based on current labour market opportunities. Over 20 managers and 46 case management staff completed the session. The in-service training outlined new, as well as consistent standards that should be applied province-wide for all the programs that provide funding to individuals who re-train or up-skill, and require the services of a case manager. Through the suite of employment and training programs offered by the Department, 23,074 individuals have participated in programs in 2015-16, up from 21,321 in 2014-15; approximately an 8.0 per cent increase. Also notable in 2015-16, was the proportion of clients funded under the Skills Development Program who were formerly receiving income support benefits, which increased from 12 to 14 per cent.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
4. Identified ways to integrate regional labour market opportunities into program offerings *(continued)*.	The Department also offers workforce adjustment supports to a group of employees whose employers have either closed or are about to close operations. These supports assist with making a transition into new employment, education, re-training, or on to retirement. Each response varies depending on the needs of the employees, as well as the local and provincial economy. Ninety-six individuals participated in information sessions throughout the province in 2015-16 to assist with their transition planning, by accessing services at an Employment Centre or by applying to programs to support re-training or attachment to the labour market. The Department has also increased immigration services to employers in regions of the province experiencing difficulties in hiring locally, such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Clarenville, as well as St. John's and surrounding communities in the Northeast Avalon Region. The Department also provided priority processing of applications under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) for healthcare professionals including physicians, licensed practical nurses, and personal care attendants, to ensure that Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and personal care homes have the staff required to deliver essential services. The Department also facilitated the issuance of work permits for nominated healthcare workers, to reduce the administrative burden for RHAs.

Discussion of Results

Many initiatives were undertaken in 2015-16 to improve supports which promote the alignment of labour supply and demand. In addition to the results achieved in meeting the annual indicators described in the previous section, progress was also made in aligning labour supply with demand with respect to immigration.

Advancing immigration strengthens the supply side of the labour market equation, which supports growth and prosperity in the province. Effective immigration requires a multi-pronged approach. In the last fiscal year, many additional immigration activities were undertaken to help contribute to strengthening the province's labour supply. Examples include:

- Promoting the introduction of the Express Entry Skilled Worker Category for nominating immigrants to the province, under the PNP. The Department held a series of 22 information sessions for employer organizations, individual employers, healthcare providers, immigration consultants, lawyers, and recruiters. Examples of participating organizations included Country Ribbon, Burin Town Council, PF Collins Ltd., Coleman's Group of Companies, the Heavy Civil Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as hotels and food service industry employers around the province.
- Nominating 597 skilled immigrants and family members, in all program categories, to work and live in Newfoundland and Labrador. This includes 30 nominations issued under the International Graduate Category of the Provincial Nominee Program; all nominees have since found employment in their fields of study with local employers.
- Confirming that an additional 586 newcomers and their family members nominated through the PNP from previous years were successful in becoming permanent residents of the province in 2015-16.
- Welcoming over 260 Syrian refugees to the province, through both the Federal Government Assisted Refugee and the Privately Sponsored Refugee Programs, from October 2015 to March 2016. This was made

possible through a renewed relationship with the Association of New Canadians and the establishment of a Government-wide senior officials committee to oversee the arrival and settlement of newcomers. These efforts were all in response to the Government of Canada's plan to re-settle 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada, including 10,000 by the end of the calendar year.

- Reviewing current and identifying future required immigrant settlement supports. Individual discussions were held with stakeholder groups, including employer organizations, concerning the structure and availability of settlement services, including gaps in services. The findings of the review indicated that stakeholders believe there were three main priorities required to improve attraction and settlement supports: 1) language training; 2) labour market attachment; and, 3) increased social connections.

Looking Forward

In 2016-17, the objective, the measure and indicators for Strategic Issue 1 are as follows:

2016-17 Plans for Strategic Issue 1

Year 3 Objective:

By March 31, 2017, the Department will have furthered initiatives to improve supports to promote alignment of labour supply and demand.

Measure:

Furthered initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand.

Indicators of Success:

1. Enhanced the use of labour market information across key sectors in the province.
2. Piloted innovative approaches to tailor employment and training programs to respond to labour market demands.
3. Released additional labour market information to support the integration of regional and sector labour market opportunities into employment planning, skills development and training processes.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 2: RESPONSIVENESS OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

More than ever, an individual's employability depends on education, training, or retraining at the post-secondary level. To support as many students as possible to achieve their educational goals, the post-secondary education system must try to anticipate and respond promptly to new educational demands generated by emerging opportunities and fields of study, as well as employer needs and workforce requirements. Fundamentally, a responsive post-secondary education system contributes to economic growth by promoting a skilled workforce and culture of innovation.

The Provincial Government recognizes that the province's future depends on having a well-educated population. Keeping tuition low means more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be able to access post-secondary education in their own province. To that end, the low tuition costs for students at both of Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary institutions was maintained, and the Provincial Government invested an additional $5.1 million of new funding in 2015-16. As well, given the Provincial Government's fiscal situation, the Department will continue to be an active partner with post-secondary institutions, as they work to implement operational and program efficiencies.

Ensuring students have access to quality post-secondary education also means having the necessary facilities for learning. In 2015-16, Government provided over $1.0 million to CNA for alteration and renovation projects. Going forward, the Department will work with the Government of Canada to provide the needed investments in infrastructure renewal at public post-secondary institutions. This will enable skills training and applied research while sustaining enrollment capacity - a direct function of available space, facilities, and equipment.

The following section outlines specific results for the identified performance indicators. These results expand on how the Department continued efforts to revitalize the apprenticeship system, introduced further efficiencies in the provision of student financial aid, and furthered mechanisms to support an innovative and responsive post-secondary training system in the province.

	Strategic Issue 2
3-Year Goal	By March 31, 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have enabled provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.
Year 2 Objective (2015-16)	By March 31, 2016, the Department will have continued initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.
Measure	Continued initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Renewed aspects of provincial apprenticeship operations.	During 2015-16, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills continued to implement initiatives that support a more responsive post-secondary education and training system. A key aspect was the renewal of the provincial apprenticeship system. In July 2015, the Department released a comprehensive plan for apprenticeship system renewal, entitled *Train Here: A Roadmap for Apprenticeship Renewal*. As a result, several improvements were introduced including an Apprenticeship Handbook and interim logbooks, as well as an alternative learning pilot. The Apprenticeship Handbook with an accompanying interim logbook, released in July 2015, allows workers to document practical experience, while waiting for the official logbook that accompanies registration in an entry-level apprenticeship program. A copy is provided to every pre-apprentice graduate and is also available on the Departmental website www.aes.gov.nl.ca/app/index.html. The Handbook includes information on the process required for apprenticeship registration, as well as eligibility requirements for block training and journeyperson certification. An Alternative Learning Pilot was also explored with industry stakeholders within five trades including welder, construction electrician, plumber, carpenter, and automotive technician. Focus group sessions were held for the construction electrician, plumber, and automotive service technician trades, with alternative training planned for 2016-17. The ultimate goal is to provide an opportunity for apprentices to attend block training while working, thus reducing the impact for both the apprentice and the employer, while improving completion rates for journeyperson certification.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Renewed aspects of provincial apprenticeship operations *(continued)*.	The Provincial Government, in collaboration with other provinces and territories, continued to make strides in improving labour mobility for apprentices. Improved mobility supports an apprentice with acquiring the required number of hours anywhere in the country, to achieve journeyperson status. Three milestones were achieved on the mobility front in 2015-16: 1. In June 2015, the Provincial Government signed the Atlantic Apprentice Mobility Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). As a result of this Agreement, each province agrees to establish mechanisms by which apprentices in any of the Atlantic Provinces may acquire a portion of their training in another Atlantic Province, for purposes of certification in their home province. In February 2016, harmonization of the carpenter, bricklayers and cook trades were completed in Atlantic Canada, which included consistency in trade names, hour requirements, curricula, common log books, and common exams. In addition, five new policies and procedures were implemented to bring consistency in the registration process, the completion process, the process for exam accommodations, examination re-writes, and the requirements for Trade Qualifiers. 2. In October 2015, the Department signed an MOU with the Province of British Columbia which promotes a mobile workforce between the two provinces, while providing Newfoundland and Labrador apprentices with additional opportunities to gain valuable work experience to support journeyperson certification. The agreement provides an opportunity for apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador to work in British Columbia, to meet ongoing labour demand in the skilled trades. It also commits both provinces to work collaboratively on the exchange of labour market information to assist with future planning. 3. All provinces and territories signed a National Mobility Protocol at the Council of the Federation meeting from July 15-17, 2015, which was implemented effective January 1, 2016. Provinces and territories are separately responsible for apprenticeship training, which has resulted in the creation of 13 different apprenticeship systems. Increased national mobility will make it easier for apprentices to obtain workplace training anywhere in Canada to complete their journeyperson certification. This Protocol supports the mutual recognition of in-school training, work experience, and associated examination results. It also assists with meeting provincial-territorial and national objectives, related to resource development and workforce demands.

"The Provincial Government continued to make strides in improving labour mobility for apprentices."

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
2. Provided mechanisms to support an innovative and responsive post-secondary education and training system.	The Department continued initiatives to support post-secondary education and training institutions to be more innovative and responsive to labour market demands. In 2015-16, the Department continued a partnership with post-secondary institutions and the Department of Transportation and Works by offering policy support to facilitate the expansion of MUN's Holyrood Marine Base and the development of the Core Science Facility. The expansion of the Holyrood facility will contain space for marine education and training and for collaboration with industry, especially relevant given the potential of the marine sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. MUN's Core Science Facility will house state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratories to support the Faculty of Science, as well as the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. It will also contain space for collaboration on research and development with industry partners. Funding for infrastructure renewal and support for programming are also key mechanisms to support innovation and responsiveness in post-secondary education. As illustrative examples in 2015-16: • CNA received $1.0M to accelerate shop modernization activities, as well as $750,000 for property, furniture, and equipment, to ensure the provision of training that meets industry standards. • Provincial grant-in-aid allocations were provided to both publically-funded institutions to meet the needs of students and the labour market, and to conduct research. MUN received $318.3 million and CNA received $64.7 million. • $267,300 was provided to the Centre for Nursing Studies to maintain the delivery of programs that supply key nursing positions to fill labour market needs. • MUN's funding level in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science was maintained to support industry requests for an increase in the number of graduates. • The Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership (LATP) provided $202,542 to support Aboriginal clients in receiving relevant labour market training for work in the natural resource sector in Labrador. This collaborative venture resulted in 389 individuals being trained in programs such as Powerline Technician, Heavy Equipment Operator, Orientation to Trades and Technology for Women, Housekeeping, Shop Steward Training, Advanced Union Training, as well as a suite of safety courses. In addition, LATP funding supported a wage subsidy program, through which 23 matches were made between employers and employees. In total, 184 individuals found employment as a result of LATP. • The Department worked with CNA to operationalize its long-term academic strategic vision to relocate and consolidate programming to develop industry relevant centres of excellence in Heavy Equipment Industrial Trades and Media and Performing Arts, which advances planning and program development.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
2. Provided mechanisms to support an innovative and responsive post-secondary education and training system *(continued)*.	• The Department provided policy support to CNA to expand the Licensed Practical Nursing program and the Home Support Worker / Personal Care Attendant program in 2015-16, to assist with addressing labour market demands identified by the Department of Health and Community Services. • The Department also worked with MUN and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to operationalize the implementation of MUN's new Doctor of Pharmacy Program (also known as Pharm D), to ensure Pharmacists continue to be trained to modern standards. • Finally, an updated Newfoundland and Labrador Credit and Program Transfer Guide (the Guide) was published in January 2016. The Guide lists established transfer of credit precedents available to students in Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to providing credit transfer information, the Guide also provides information about the public post-secondary system, programs linked to high school (such as the International Baccalaureate Program and the Advanced Placement Program), as well as guidelines to support student mobility among public institutions in the province. The Guide can be found online at www.aes.gov.nl.ca/postsecondary/transferguide/index.html.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
3. Introduced further efficiencies into the Student Financial Assistance Program.	The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada work together to provide student financial assistance. Both loans and grants are available for students to access post-secondary education. A responsive post-secondary education system is supported by an efficient financial assistance program for students. To that end, a number of improvements and efficiencies were implemented during 2015-16. For the 2015-16 academic year, Newfoundland and Labrador Student Loans were eliminated and replaced with the Newfoundland and Labrador Student Grant. This change provided full time, eligible students with a grant of $140 dollars per week. This included those studying within Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as those studying outside the province, if the chosen program was not available in-province. Over 3,840 students accessed the Newfoundland and Labrador Student Grant in the 2015-16 Academic Year. In July 2015, the Department announced the introduction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Part-Time Student Incentive Grant. The Part-Time Incentive Grant provides up to $500 per semester to a maximum of $1,000 per year for eligible residents studying part-time within the province. This needs-based grant will ease the financial burden associated with part-time, post-secondary study and act as an incentive to encourage mature learners and those participating in the workforce, to continue their education through part-time studies. If needs are assessed at an amount higher than $1,200 per year, part-time students are eligible for the provincial grant. To create this new program for part-time students, the Department tapped into the application and needs assessment process under the existing federal Canada Student Loan and Grant Program for part-time students, without requiring additional work effort or increased staffing resources for the Student Financial Services Division. This approach made it possible for the Department to offer a new program which provides more financial assistance to complete post-secondary education, for a niche group likely to strengthen the labour market, without increasing human resource costs. Forty-four students availed of the grant in the 2015-16 fiscal year. In 2015-16, the Department increased the use of direct deposit for students in receipt of student financial assistance. As of August 2015, all students deemed eligible for the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities, were registered for direct deposit. Such a service reduces the points of contact for students needing assistance to purchase services and equipment to support the attainment of their education. All students now have the opportunity to receive student financial assistance payments electronically.

Discussion of Results

During 2015-16, the Department undertook a number of initiatives to enable post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands. This included renewing aspects of the apprenticeship system, introducing further efficiencies into the Student Financial Assistance Program, and supporting an innovative and responsive post-secondary education and training system. In addition to the results achieved in meeting the annual indicators, progress was also made in the strengthening of post-secondary education capacity through joint initiatives with public institutions.

The Department held discussions with post-secondary institutions regarding the alignment of labour market projections with course offerings. In March 2016, the Department met with 22 private training institutions to discuss current labour market information needs and sources. The Department also worked closely with CNA on labour market information and needs. CNA has noted its significant use of provincial labour market information during regular labour market consultations, a five-year review of programs with industry, and discussions with industry stakeholders to respond to immediate needs for contract training and changes in regular programming.

This past year, the Department provided significant policy support to both MUN and CNA as these institutions worked with the Department to review their operations and capital expenditures, while delivering quality post-secondary education to students.

Efforts also continued to simplify the provincial apprenticeship process. During 2015-16, the Department began collaborative work with the other Atlantic Provinces to jointly procure a common Apprenticeship Information Technology System. Once complete, this tool will facilitate harmonization; provide significant efficiencies for each province to enhance reporting capabilities; and, provide better services for employers, apprentices and training providers.

In addition, the Department had significant success in reaching out to students with disabilities and support organizations, to promote resources that assist with the attainment of post-secondary education. The Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment is a federal non-repayable grant up to $8,000 per academic year, for students with a permanent disability who demonstrate education-related costs as a result of the disability. The allocations under this program have constantly increased from $186,196 (or 44 applications) in 2009-10 to $713,754 (or 177 applications) in 2015-16.

Looking Forward

In 2016-17 the objective, the measure and the indicators for Strategic Issue 2 are as follows:

2016-17 Plans for Strategic Issue 2

Year 3 Objective:

By March 31, 2017, the Department will have furthered initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.

Measure:

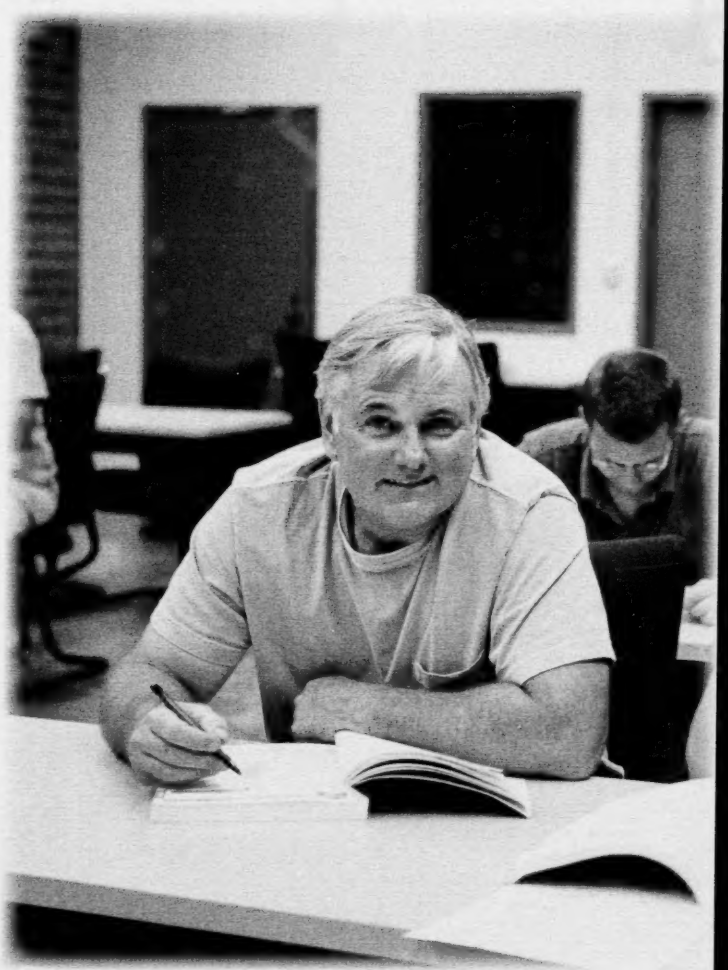
Furthered initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.

Indicators of Success:

1. Furthered apprenticeship renewal initiatives.
2. Conducted a review in collaboration with College of the North Atlantic, to ensure responsiveness to student needs and labour market demands.
3. Increased the efficiency of the Student Financial Assistance Program.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 3: SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In accordance with its mission, the Department is working to improve services that support citizens in sustaining employment or becoming gainfully employed, whether this involves changing careers, working for the first time, preparing for a new job, or upskilling for the future. The Department is also focused on supporting people who may require extra support or who are currently underrepresented in the provincial workforce, which includes older workers, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, or individuals receiving financial benefits. The process of improving supports is ongoing and is achieved by identifying inefficiencies or barriers across the Department's inventory of programs and services, and then targeting areas for modification.



Fundamental to supporting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is the improvement of literacy levels among citizens. The Department has Service Agreements with 15 providers in the province to deliver Adult Basic Education in 38 locations, and also develops and provides curriculum to these service providers. In addition, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills provides funding to community agencies to deliver initiatives to individuals that help prepare for, attain, and maintain employment. These funded initiatives respond to gaps in services, as well as individuals' identified needs or barriers to participation in the labour market.

In 2015-16, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills made progress toward its objective to continue initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities. For example, the Department piloted a new interdisciplinary team approach to assist youth clients and modified the application requirements for income support to encourage employment planning and eventual employment. The following section outlines specific results for the identified performance indicators and illustrates the service delivery improvements achieved within Departmental operations.

	Strategic Issue 3
3-Year Goal	By March 31, 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.
Year 2 Objective (2015-16)	By March 31, 2016, the Department will have continued initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.
Measure	Continued initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.
Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Modified how program interventions are delivered to individuals, including those having difficulty attaching to the labour market.	The Department has a long standing history of providing supports to individuals who have difficulty attaching to the labour market. In fact, several federal and provincial government partnerships direct financial resources to groups that are under-represented in the labour market such as older workers, persons with disabilities, individuals eligible for employment insurance, and youth. Last year the Department supported over 23,000 individuals with employment and training supports. Each year, pilot projects and new approaches are tested, with the goal of expanding the Department's reach and support to individuals, as they transition into and through the labour market. Details below outline modifications to program interventions to support individuals having difficulty attaching to the labour market. In 2015-16, the Department began a pilot project in the Western Region, which involved the creation of an interdisciplinary team to assist youth under 18 years of age from families who are receiving income support benefits. The team draws from separate but complimentary disciplines of career guidance and social work, and includes a Regional Manager, Social Worker, and a Career Development Specialist. Staff provide employment planning supports at the appropriate level for each client. Depending upon the individual, the plan may include returning to high school or moving on to post-secondary education, as well as assistance with applying for summer employment or volunteer work to gain experience. The youth client may also participate in group sessions that explore topics such as the value of work, the value of self-sufficiency, and different career options. Historically, the Department did not focus employment planning efforts on youth under age 18 years. The creation of the multi-disciplinary team, the focus on youth, and the use of new group sessions to impact behaviour, are modifications to the traditional delivery of income support benefits to younger clients.

"Staff provide employment planning supports at the appropriate level for each client."

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
1. Modified how program interventions are delivered to individuals, including those having difficulty attaching to the labour market *(continued)*.	To improve services, assessment teams were also established in the Eastern Region to examine business processes and chart client flow patterns in select areas of income support and employment services. Lean management principles and tools were used to map current processes, identify best practices, highlight areas of improvement, and identify future efficiencies. Four functions were reviewed including processes for the case management of individual clients receiving employment services, individual funding agreements, organizational funding agreements, and the integration of income support clients to employment services. These reviews have identified process changes for the Department to implement in the coming year. Illustrative examples of the changes include reducing multiple points of contact, reducing wait times, modifying delegation of authority, and introducing more rigor into documentation requirements. The creation of regional and provincial-office teams in 2015-16, to strategically assess how programs and functions are delivered, represents a modification that will strengthen service delivery in the future. Another example of a modified program intervention was a revised training model for apprentices in the Oil Heat System Technician Trade. To increase the success rates of apprentices moving into journeyperson certification, the Department, in partnership with the Industry of Oil Heat System Technicians, modified the requirements for apprenticeship training in 2015-16. The change has resulted in a shorter in-class training block portion for entry-level students; down from a 24-week block to a 6-week block. Another program modification that was tested and implemented in 2015-16 involved increasing supports and accommodations for apprenticeship exams, to improve completion rates for Red Seal Examinations. The Department partnered with CNA's Learning Resource Facilitators in an exam administration pilot. Technology supports were provided to apprentice students with documented needs or disabilities, while attending training and writing exams. During 2015-16, approximately 25 apprenticeship students availed of this service. Given this success, CNA has now made the provision of exam accommodations and supports a regular offering for apprentices. The Department will also be exploring options to expand this to other private training institutions in the next fiscal year. These collaborations are crucial given the Department has legislative authority over apprenticeship and trade certification, to ensure standardization, while training institutions provide the delivery of educational content and skills.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
2. Implemented service delivery improvements in select areas.	The Department offers a wide spectrum of supports and services to job seekers, employers, newcomers, students, communities, as well as to individuals in need of basic benefits. In keeping with a multi-year approach to achieve goals, the Department continued initiatives that improve supports to help individuals participate in employment by implementing the service delivery improvements outlined below. To fulfill a 10-day service standard response within Student Financial Services, the Department implemented an initiative to streamline application processing for student aid in 2015-16. By providing applicants with scheduled assessment dates, staff resources could be properly aligned to process applications in the most efficient manner; thus releasing funds more quickly to support students with the financial requirements for post-secondary education. As a result, 98.5 per cent of applications were processed within a 10-day period. The Department developed and distributed *Standard Operating Procedures for Private Training Institutions* in September 2015. This Manual provides guidance to private post-secondary institutions interested in registering and operating in the province. The new manual provides additional clarity for institutions on the requirements for approval of new programs and program changes, approving new instructors, creating and maintaining student records, as well as creating a new institution. To promote the use of the new resource, meetings were held with institutions in St. John's and via teleconference, which were attended by 17 institutions. During 2015-16, a number of service delivery improvements were made in the provincial apprenticeship system. Online application and registration processes were implemented for apprentices. This meant that apprentices no longer had to mail or drop-off documents, which was especially relevant given the mobility of apprentices. Also, the issuance of transcripts, as well as class calls for training, were streamlined. This effort reduced the points of contact for apprentices and journeypersons, thus saving time. Pay increases for apprentices who acquired their training hours were also implemented in a more time efficient manner, as a result of institutions forwarding transcripts directly to the Department. With respect to employment and training programs and services, the Department has begun collecting baseline data to understand current service practices that will assist with the further development of standards of practice. This past year, a quality assessment review process was piloted and guidelines for the case management of employment and training programs were developed and implemented. Standards of practice for client intake, assessment, and developing and managing an employment plan have been incorporated within case management policy and procedures and are being implemented to better equip staff in managing services. The Department's Support Application Social Workers were also realigned in 2015-16 to dedicate 100 per cent of efforts to providing assistance to single parents for child support payments, as well as helping families increase their attachment to the labour market, thus reducing reliance on income support.

Published 2015-16 Indicator	2015-16 Actual Results
3. Enhanced staffing skills and abilities in Employment Centres to support the uptake of adult literacy programming.	In support of province-wide adult literacy programming, the Department has worked to enhance the skills and abilities of staff in Employment Centres around the province. The enhancement process began with a scan of tools and resources being used in other Canadian jurisdictions, to support literacy and essential skills. It was confirmed that Newfoundland and Labrador's approach is similar to other provinces and territories. The Department presently has two literacy assessment tools. The Department's Enhanced Guidelines for the Delivery Adult Basic Education (ABE) provides staff with a case management approach to ABE delivery. These guidelines provide direction in areas such assessment; client eligibility for supports and benefits; client attendance and progression; and suggest options for intervention when required. Career counselling staff also use the Employment and Training Assessment (ETA) to help clients determine the level of employment readiness, the type of employment or training services, and the type of benefits that will be most helpful. Equipped with insight from other provinces and territories, as well as the two existing resources, an integrated training module was developed. In May and June 2015, approximately 70 Career Development Specialists, Client Service Officers, and Client Service Managers received training on adult literacy programming and assessments. A case management approach was used to assess a client's options for academic upgrading including ABE, General Educational Development (GED) testing, and CNA's Comprehensive Arts and Sciences (CAS) Transition Program. The feedback from staff was positive and has resulted in program efficiencies such as reduced processing time for applications. This training will now be instituted annually to support the uptake of adult literacy programming.

Discussion of Results

In addition to the results achieved in meeting the annual indicators as described previously, two other models for improving supports that encourage employment as an ultimate goal, were explored.

- The Non-Study Period Initiative piloted the seamless delivery of financial supports, along with training allowances to former income support clients, who returned to post-secondary education or ABE. It was identified that former income support clients who had engaged in training or post-secondary education, which had a non-study period in excess of three weeks primarily in the summer months, often re-applied for income support benefits while waiting to return to school. These requests increased the number of applications for income support during peak times of the year, leading to overall delays in the processing of all income support applications. This delay in turn increased the financial hardship of individuals striving to complete education in order to attach to the labour market more permanently, once the non-study period began. A Lean Approach was taken to assess how best to support clients in non-study periods, as Lean provides tools for structured assessments that guide service delivery improvements. Individuals funded for post-secondary education or re-training are required to have a case-managed employment plan which has long-term employment as the ultimate goal. Therefore, a new business process was created for case managers to connect with clients prior to the study period ending. This follow-up encouraged attendance at a job search workshop and required clients to seek transitional employment or volunteer work experience for the non-study period. If earnings were insufficient, a Transition Allowance was provided as an interim measure. These efficiencies reduced the number of income support applications, which helps lessen the demand for service in the Applications Unit, thus reducing delays in requests for assistance. It also helps reduce financial hardship in non-study periods to keep students motivated to continue education, as well as providing additional work experience, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of sustained employment.

- The Department also began the development of a model to increase labour market attachment for applicants aged 18 to 22 years who apply for income support benefits, in two pilot communities in the province. Once implemented, a modified application process will redirect the client's initial benefit payment to an Employment Centre for pickup. This in-person visit will facilitate an assessment of the client's employment needs, engage clients in the employment planning process, and provide information on the wide array of programs and services available to support the attainment of employment goals. Clients would then be encouraged to avail of ongoing supports and to connect regularly with case managers. As the Department moves forward into 2016-17, it will continue to look for additional ways to engage target groups such as single parents and single individuals, to increase labour market attachment, especially given changes in the structure of the income support caseload in recent years.

In support of the mission to improve the quality and delivery of services, as well as evidence of the Department's ongoing efforts for improving service delivery, other noteworthy examples of progress in the last fiscal year include:

- Changes to the *Income and Employment Support Regulations* to support the payment of municipal taxes (i.e., property tax) for a full year at the beginning of the tax year, rather than on a quarterly basis. This change only applies to income support recipients who own their own home and who have been in receipt of benefits for two years. It included new payment schedules, which improved billing time to municipal councils; improved privacy as individuals no longer need to be identified to municipal councils as income support recipients; and, it created the flexibility to direct payment to Regional Waste Management Boards, as these entities were not

covered in the existing *Regulations*. Beginning in January 2016, clients could submit their municipal tax bills to the Department to make payment on their behalf, or clients could be provided with the funds directly, to pay their own tax bill.

- Fully implementing six units around the province, as the new delivery model to support back-end functions for processing income support benefits. The Service Support Unit in Gander was finalized to support the consolidation of all email enquiries from clients, wherever they may live in the province.

Looking Forward

In 2016-17 the objective, the measure and the indicators for Strategic Issue 3 are as follows:

2016-17 Plans for Strategic Issue 3

Year 3 Objective:
By March 31, 2017, the Department will have furthered initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.

Measure:
Furthered initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities.

Indicators of Success:
1. Enhanced labour market supports.
2. Streamlined delivery of programs and services.
3. Initiated development of an Adult Literacy Strategy.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The year ahead (2016-17) presents both opportunities and challenges as the Department works to implement the third and final year of its current strategic plan, and to develop a new three-year plan (2017-20) to support the mandate of the Department. These challenges and opportunities guide the direction of future work. The following outlines some of the anticipated challenges and opportunities facing the Department as it moves forward.

Challenges include:

- Anticipating the labour needs of communities, sectors, and regions of the province, particularly in times of economic volatility and employment fluctuations.
- Supporting our partners to continue with the provision of responsive supports and services.
- Planning for and implementing departmental priorities while engaged in responsible fiscal management.
- Ensuring program models are further developed to be more responsive to the labour market, especially given the demographic changes in current caseloads.

Opportunities include:

- Consulting and planning for new departmental initiatives such as an Immigration Strategy and an Adult Literacy Strategy.
- Implementing population growth initiatives.
- Releasing additional labour market information to support planning and programming.
- Continuing to support citizens with the range of programs and services offered by the Department.
- Focusing our efforts to help more single income support clients attach to the labour market, in light of the current demographic context.
- Promoting the trades as a career option and increasing awareness of certification processes for apprentices and Trade Qualifiers, through a partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association.
- Making meaningful contributions to cross-governmental initiatives such as Violence Prevention and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities, as well as other horizontal strategies.
- Ensuring the Department continues to be innovative and responsive as it moves into the 2017-20 planning cycle.
- Working with the other Atlantic Provinces through the Atlantic Workforce Partnership (AWP) to partner on Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization; Immigration Policy and Programs; Federal Labour Market Programs; Labour Market Information; Youth Labour Market Attachment and Retention; and Business Supports.
- Advancing common priorities and interests with the Government of Canada, such as increasing access to skilled workers, minimizing the skills mismatch in the labour market, growing immigration levels, maximizing pathways for post-secondary students, and, ensuring businesses are able to attract and retain talent.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Summary of Expenditure and Related Revenue for the Year Ended March 31, 2016 (unaudited)

	Actual Expenditure $	Amended Budget $	Original Budget $
Executive and Support Services			
Minister's Office	171,500	172,000	222,200
Executive Support	1,352,900	1,353,900	1,245,600
Administrative Support	5,780,700	6,194,900	6,064,400
Program Development & Planning	1,676,700	1,684,700	2,165,000
Newfoundland and Labrador Student Loans Program	30,303,400	30,323,300	30,363,300
Service Delivery			
Client Services	20,907,600	20,778,500	20,552,300
Income and Social Development			
Income Assistance	229,390,400	229,306,700	232,206,700
National Child Benefit Reinvestment	383,100	430,000	600,000
Mother/Baby Nutrition Supplement	235,000	282,700	385,700
Workforce Development and Immigration			
Workforce Development and Productivity Secretariat	712,700	722,500	881,700
Employment and Training Programs	1,868,500	1,899,500	1,955,600
Employment Development Programs	9,230,000	9,463,200	9,841,400
Labour Market Development Agreements	96,963,700	98,727,100	100,547,900
Canada/Newfoundland and Labrador Job Fund Agreement	3,046,500	3,471,000	3,471,000
Labour Market Adjustment Programs	64,000	297,400	1,359,200
Employment Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities	10,632,900	10,693,200	11,152,200
Youth Services	8,117,600	8,294,900	8,794,900
Skills and Labour Market Research	1,241,900	1,211,200	1,496,100
Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism	921,800	932,800	1,098,600
Advanced Studies			
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification	11,516,000	11,316,000	11,980,000
Literacy and Institutional Services	5,628,500	6,088,300	6,132,300
Atlantic Veterinary College	1,177,100	1,177,100	1,238,800
Memorial University - Operations	320,621,900	320,654,700	319,254,700
Memorial University - Physical Plant & Equipment	3,847,500	3,847,500	6,599,500
College of the North Atlantic - Operations	84,735,500	85,315,400	89,116,900
College of the North Atlantic - Physical Plant & Equipment	2,058,800	2,050,000	3,550,000

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED	Actual Expenditure $	Amended Budget $	Original Budget $
Student Financial Services - Administration	1,591,700	1,649,300	1,680,600
Scholarships	122,700	123,800	123,800
Training Programs	9,289,200	10,000,000	7,000,000
Total Gross Expenditures	**863,589,800**	**868,461,600**	**881,080,400**
Total Revenue	**(150,528,900)**	**(146,177,500)**	**(155,720,600)**
Total Net Expenditures	**713,060,900**	**722,284,100**	**725,359,800**
Branch Totals			
Executive and Support	39,285,200	39,728,800	40,060,500
Service Delivery	20,907,600	20,778,500	20,552,300
Income and Social Development	230,008,500	230,019,400	233,192,400
Workforce Development and Immigration	132,799,600	135,712,800	140,598,600
Advanced Studies	440,588,963	442,222,100	446,676,600
TOTAL DEPARTMENT GROSS EXPENDITURES	**863,589,800**	**868,461,600**	**881,080,400**

Expenditure and revenue figures are unaudited and based on public information from the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year that ended March 31, 2016. Audited financial statements are a requirement at the government level and are made public through the Public Accounts process; however, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Contact Information

Appendix B: Public Entities

Appendix A: Contact Information

Further information about the services offered by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills may be obtained from the Department's web site at www.aes.gov.nl.ca or by contacting the Department of Advanced Education and Skills at Confederation Building, 3rd Floor, West Block, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, A1B 4J6; Telephone: (709) 729-2480.

To access career, employment and labour market information, call the Labour Market and Career Information Hotline at 1-800-563-6600; TTY: 1-877-292-4205; or, visit www.aes.gov.nl.ca/lmi.html.

For in-person employment assistance, visit one of the following Employment Centres around the province that can be found at: www.aes.gov.nl.ca/career/employment_centres.pdf.

To access the immigration and multiculturalism information call (709) 729-6607 or visit http://www.nlimmigration.ca.

To access Student Aid Services, call the Main Office toll free at 1-888-657-0800; St. John's (709)729-5829; or, visit www.aes.gov.nl.ca/studentaid/index.html.

To access Apprenticeship and Certification Services, call the Main Office toll free at 1-877-771-3737; St. John's (709)729-2729; Clarenville (709) 466-3982; Grand Falls-Windsor (709) 292-4215; Corner Brook (709) 637-2366; Happy Valley–Goose Bay (709) 896-6348.

To access Adult Basic Education and adult literacy services, call (709)729-6191.

Access to Information and Privacy:

- For information regarding an access to information request or to inquire about the collection or use of your personal information, please contact the Department's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Coordinator at (709) 724-4276.

To access income support services:

- Citizens residing in all communities from Clarenville to St. John's to Trepassey, including the Bonavista, Avalon, and Burin Peninsulas, please call (709)729-7888 or toll free 1-877-729-7888.
- Citizens residing in all Labrador communities, please call toll-free at: 1-866-449-3144.
- Citizens residing in communities on the Northern Peninsula heading east, including Corner Brook, Port aux Basques, up to Hampden, please call toll-free at: 1-866-417-4753.
- Citizens residing in all communities heading east from Hampden, including the Baie Verte Peninsula, Central Newfoundland and the Connaigre Peninsula up to Charlottetown near Terra Nova National Park, please call toll-free: 1-888-632-4555.

Appendix B: Public Entities

The following public entities reported through the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, and prepared separate year-end reports in 2015-16:

- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- College of the North Atlantic
- Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Private Training Corporation
- Memorial University Pension Plan
- Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board
- Income and Employment Support Appeal Board

Please Note: Two additional public bodies (the Student Financial Assistance Appeals Board and the Council on Higher Education) also report to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, but did not have activity in the April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 period. As a result, these entities are not tabling year-end reports. In the event that either public body has activity in the future, reports will be submitted as required under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.